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THE FREEDMEN OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

AN ADDRESS

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J. MILLER M'KIM,

IN

SANSOM HALL, JULY 9th, 1862.

TOGETHER

WITH A LETTER FROM THE SAME

TO

STEPHEN COLWELL, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Port Royal Relief Committee.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIS P. HAZARD,

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THE

## FREED MEN OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

*Speaker*  
ADDRESS OF J. M. M'KIM,

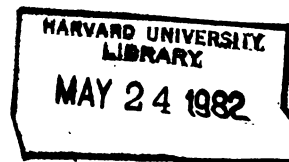
At Sansom Hall, on Wednesday evening, July 9th,  
to an audience invited by the Port Royal Relief  
Committee; STEPHEN COLWELL, Esq.,  
in the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am here to-night at the request of my friends and coadjutors of the Port Royal Relief Committee, to give some account of a recent visit which, at their instance, I have been paying to the Sea Islands of South Carolina. My mission was one of observation and inquiry—its object being to obtain accurate information as to the condition and wants of the liberated blacks, and the progress and promise of the free-labor experiment there being made.

Before proceeding with my account, it may be proper for me to make a few preliminary statements for the benefit of such—if such there be here—as may not have given this subject their particular attention.

The successful bombardment by our fleet, under Com. Dupont, of the two rebel forts at Port Royal, on the 7th of November, put our forces in possession of all, or nearly all, that rich and fertile portion of the Palmetto State known as the Sea Islands. At the approach of our soldiers, the planters fled to the main, carrying with them what property they could, including as many of their slaves, especially their house-servants, as they could induce or com-





pel to accompany them. They left behind them, however, nearly 10,000 of their plantation slaves, a large proportion of whom were aged, infirm, and children. They left, also, considerable stores of corn, and still more considerable quantities of cotton. Of the latter most was unginned, and some of it yet on the stalk. The negroes showed themselves so loyal and friendly, and in all respects so well disposed, that our Government concluded to employ them at wages in gathering the cotton, and preparing it for market. The wages that were promised, though moderate, were nominally—that is, in the intentions of the Government—all-sufficient; but when they were disbursed in store goods, at exorbitant rates, by selfish and sordid agents, they amounted to but a meagre pittance. Some of these cotton agents were honorable and upright men; others were base and unscrupulous. Nevertheless, the blacks worked industriously, and were content. As the result of their labor, upwards of 1,100,000\* pounds of this valuable article was shipped to New York, there to be sold for the benefit of the National treasury. Its value in dollars and cents, and that of the labor which made it available, may be estimated when I state that a lot some six weeks ago brought seventy-two cents a pound at auction. Since that time the price has advanced.

Encouraged by the success of this enterprise, the Government resolved to try the experiment of planting a new crop. This undertaking was entrusted to Edward L. Peirce, Esq., at one time a private in the ranks of our volunteer army at Fortress Monroe, then a rising young lawyer at the bar of Boston. Mr. Peirce was a personal friend of Secretary Chase, and had been formerly his private secretary. He had proved his capacity for the work now confided to him by the skill and judgment with which, while at Fortress Monroe, he had organized the “contrabands” there, and

\* Mr. Suydam, Government Agent at Beaufort, kindly furnished the following:

“Memorandum of shipment of cotton from Port Royal, S. C., from Dec. 16, '61, to June 13, '62:

Ginned, .....	lbs 284,494
Unginned, 3,527,345, 25 per cent. being clean cotton, ...	881,836

lbs 1,166,330

Some more yet to be shipped.”

turned to account their industry. Constituted Special Agent of the Treasury Department, with certain powers, one of which was to organize a corps of assistants, and another to draw on a fund placed at his disposal for the purchase of seeds, implements, etc., necessary for the execution of his task, Mr. Peirce repaired to Boston, and proceeded to lay the facts of the case before his friends and the public. In a short time, assisted by a Freedmen's Association, which had been formed there, he got together a body of about fifty men and women to go to Port Royal, there to labor as superintendents and teachers; the superintendents to oversee the planting of crops and the like, and the teachers to instruct the children, and, as far as convenient, the adults, in the rudiments of learning; and both to inculcate upon all habits of self-respect and self-support, and the lessons of morality and religion.

While Mr. Peirce was thus at work in Boston, Mr. French—Rev. Mansfield French—was similarly employed in New York. Mr. French had also been an old friend of Mr. Chase. He was earnestly devoted to the cause of freedom, and had taken a lively and active interest in the blacks at Port Royal from the time our forces first occupied those islands. With his aid, the association at New York selected upwards of forty men and women to act as laborers in this work. In a few weeks these ladies and gentlemen—for such the chief of them were, eminently and in all respects—were on the ground and at work.

In the meantime the attention of the people of Philadelphia was called to this subject. The statements published in the newspapers, and the appeals of Gen. Sherman and Com. Dupont had created quite a lively feeling in regard to the matter. A public meeting was called, and National Hall, as you will remember, was crowded to repletion. Bishop Potter presided, and Dr. Tyng and others addressed the meeting, all of them setting forth in eloquent terms the pitiable condition of the liberated blacks, their destitution, moral and material, and the duty devolving on the people of the North to come to their relief. A permanent committee was appointed to raise funds to procure food and clothes for these suffering people, and otherwise to carry out the purpose of the meeting. The committee organized and went to work.

In a short time they raised between five and six thousand dollars in money, and a very considerable quantity of clothes, new and second-hand. With part of the money they purchased provisions—bacon, fish, and molasses—which, with some twenty or thirty boxes of clothes, they sent South, with as little delay as possible. They purchased and forwarded, also, considerable quantities of new material for men's and women's wear, and thread, needles, thimbles, and the like, with which to make it up. At the same time they sent a lady from this city to superintend the distribution of these supplies. Or rather a lady of this city voluntarily, and from her own deep interest in the cause, went, and there—at Port Royal—assumed the onerous task of distributing by gift and sale these contributions of Philadelphia charity. Soon were received in return the most grateful acknowledgments from Mr. Peirce and his coadjutors. The supplies had been most timely, and had done great good. They had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cheered the hearts of the blacks, and strengthened the hands of their white friends.

The committee, of course, were encouraged. They desired to continue and to increase their gifts, but they needed more accurate information. None of them had ever been at Port Royal, nor had any of them any personal knowledge in regard to what was most needed. The people of New York and Boston were better informed. Some from both of these cities had been on the ground. It was deemed important that one of our number should also go, and in person make himself thoroughly acquainted with the position of affairs. And because others more competent did not feel at liberty to leave their business or their duties at home, the lot fell upon me. Accompanied by my daughter, I left New York in the steamer that sailed for Port Royal on the 2d of June, and returned in the Ericsson, which arrived at that city on the 28th of the same month, having been gone about four weeks. I spent between two and three weeks of this time in visiting the chief points of the principal islands. I visited and inspected plantations on St. Helena's and Ladies' Islands, and on the islands of Port Royal and Hilton Head. I also touched at Edisto and James Islands, where I had an opportunity of making

some inquiries. James Island, it will be remembered, was the scene of the late disastrous engagement between the rebel troops and our forces under Gen. Benham. While gone, in pursuance of the purpose of my mission, I talked with people of all classes; with white and black, soldiers and sailors, officers and privates, Abolitionists and anti-Abolitionists. The result of my inquiries it is my business now to state.

As to the experiment of working the negroes by wages, and cultivating the land by free labor, I have to say that the enterprise has thus far, in all respects, been entirely successful. This is a fact beyond the reach of cavil, and will not be denied by any honest man, having information sufficient to justify an opinion. It does not rest on the testimony of any one man or set of men, but on figures—arithmetical figures and statistical tables—which have been submitted to the world, and which challenge scrutiny. I allude particularly to Mr. Peirce's late report, which it is to be presumed most here have read.

The success of the experiment is seen in the fact that 15,000\* acres of cotton, corn, and other provisions, are now in an advanced and satisfactory state of cultivation, needing little more than a few weeks of ordinary fair weather to ensure a liberal harvest. If our arms should encounter no disastrous reverses, and these crops should be favored with the customary alternations of sunshine and shower, Mr. Peirce will have furnished an argument against slavery which merchants on change and men of business can neither gainsay nor resist. For remember that this experiment has been made under the most unfavorable circumstances. It was not begun until full six weeks after the usual time of commencing to prepare for the new crop. The work, instead of beginning early in February, was not started till the last of March. Then, the implements were altogether

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\* "It is with pleasure that the aggregate result is here submitted. It makes (adding the negro patches to the corn-fields of the plantations) 8,315 12-100 acres of provisions (corn, potatoes, etc.) planted, 5,480 11-100 acres of cotton planted—in all, 13,795 23-100 acres of provisions and cotton planted. Adding to these the 2,394 acres of late corn, to a great extent for fodder, cow-peas, etc., to be planted, and the crop of this year presents a total of 16,189 23-100 acres."—*Mr. Peirce's Report.*

insufficient, both in number and character. There was a lack of hoes, plows, and horses to draw the plows. In addition to this, the people were reluctant to work on cotton. They were ready enough to go to work in raising corn, the value and need of which they could understand, but cotton had been their old enemy; it had been the cause of all their woes. To them it meant slavery. In this reluctance they had been encouraged by our soldiers, who had advised them not to raise cotton, which they could not eat, but only corn, which would feed them, and which would be their friend in the coming winter. It required much effort to overcome this difficulty. Then besides, the superintendents were strangers to the business. Few of them had ever seen a cotton plant outside of a green-house, and some of them knew nothing practically of any kind of agriculture. They were strangers to the country, to the people, to the usages, to the climate, to everything, and all they had to depend upon was their own good sense and good will for the work, and the good sense and co-operative good will of the blacks. These were some of the difficulties that embarrassed the enterprise; and yet, under all these discouragements, 15,000 acres of cotton, corn and potatoes have been put under successful culture. The actual work has been done by about 3,800 laborers, that being the average number of able-bodied field hands out of the 10,000.

The success of this experiment is further seen in the contentment and happiness of the people. That they are content is seen from their looks. Wherever you go, you meet cheerful and happy faces. Their words corroborate the language of their looks. "Oh, yes, massa, dese is good times." "Nebber see sich good times afore." "Too good to last, massa; too good to last." These are samples of the expressions we heard wherever we went. And yet these people have been and still are working for very scanty wages. Until this time their pay has been almost wholly in promises. But they are content. They have their freedom. They have food and clothes, and what they value more, kind and sympathizing friends. There is but one alloy to their happiness; that is, their fear of "de secesh." They can't divest themselves of a dread of their old master's return. But

for this, these black people would be what their former owners falsely declared them to be, "the happiest peasantry in the world."

To get a proper idea of these people's present condition and feelings, it is only necessary to go on a Sunday to one of their churches. I availed myself of the earliest opportunity after my arrival, to enjoy this privilege. On the first day of the week there, all go to church, or rather to Sunday school, which is generally held in the church. During the week children are taught, (and to the number, in all the islands, of about 2,500,) but on Sunday, all ages assemble, and the superintendents and others act in the capacity of teachers. On St. Helena's Island, the Baptist Church, a large brick building, was the place of meeting. When I entered, though not late, the house was well filled, and the exercises had begun.

The teachers were scattered through the congregation, and with elementary books and large cards containing simple words were busy at work. These cards comprised such sentences as "God is love," "Thou shalt not steal," "Fear God; walk in His ways," etc., etc. In this manner they instructed the minds of these eager and docile people in the elements of our language, while at the same time they impressed upon their hearts the lessons of morality and religion. It was a pleasing sight. The people were decorous in their behavior, and tidy in their appearance. They were comfortably and even becomingly dressed, many of them wearing the clothes—frocks, jackets, etc.—that had been sent to them from Philadelphia.

Here, among the teachers, were persons who at home belonged to diverse and often conflicting sects, all engaged, heartily and fraternally, in inculcating upon their hearers the fundamental doctrines of a common religion. There stood, card in hand, with the upturned faces of a large class before him, young Mr. Parke, son of Professor Parke, of Andover. Next to him, similarly occupied, stood Mr. Gannett, son of Rev. Dr. Gannett, successor to Dr. Channing. Not far off was the Rev. Mr. French, of the Methodist Church; further on was Mr. Ruggles, a graduate of Yale, and near him Mr. Hooper, an alumnus of

Harvard, the former a Presbyterian, the latter a Unitarian. Near by stood the two ladies who have gone out under the auspices of the Port Royal Relief Committee of Philadelphia, the one an earnest Baptist, the other a conscientious and consistent member of the church under the care of the Rev. Dr. Furness. Near them stood a young lady who was a member of no religious denomination, but who had been tenderly and conscientiously reared outside of sectarian pales, on the outskirts of liberal Quakerism. I thus specify, not to gratify curiosity, but to describe practically the character and mode of operation of the people engaged in this movement.

When the school was about to close, it was announced that there was a gentleman present from Philadelphia, who would make some remarks. "Philadelphia," it was added, "is the place from which was sent that good bacon and that nice molasses." At this the people's faces lit up with an expression of pleasure and recognition. I was glad of the opportunity to give utterance to my feelings. I told them who I was, and what I had come for. That the people of Philadelphia were much interested in their condition; that we had heard different reports about them; that some had said that the black people of South Carolina were industrious and well disposed; willing to work if well treated, and not needing the whip. Others that these blacks were lazy and good for nothing; spoiled by kind treatment, and unmanageable without a master. That I had come to see what the truth was on this and other subjects, and that I was happy to say I had a good report to carry back; one that would delight the hearts of the many friends who would be wanting to hear what word I should bring. I had been pleased to have their assurances that they thanked heartily their distant benefactors, but that there might be no mistake on this head, I wished them now to tell me in their own words, just what to say when I should get home. "Shall I repeat what I have heard you say, that you thank them and pray God to bless them?" "Yes, sa; yes, massa," came from different parts of the house. "Stand up," said one of the teachers, "and speak out for yourselves." Upon this, they all rose, and then followed a fair shower of expres-

sion. "Tell 'em, tank 'em; tell 'em, tank 'em, massa. Tell 'em, tank 'em too much. Tell 'em God bless 'em; tell 'em God Almighty bless 'em." "I will," said I. "The very first opportunity I get I shall deliver your message." And now, my friends, you that have contributed to this holy charity—I have only to add that the blessings of the poor, and of them that have been ready to perish, have come upon you.

As I was leaving the house, I was met at the door by a group whose hearts had not been sufficiently relieved, and who needed further expression. Said one woman, "Tell de Philadelpy people we tank em *too much*, massa, TOO MUCH." This, by the way, is a common phrase with these people when they want to express themselves strongly. It is a sort of fourth degree of comparison, as it were—*much—more—very much—TOO MUCH*. We heard it frequently used when they would be speaking of their contentment and gratitude. One man in the group took my hand and said, "Tell 'em tank 'em; tell em God bless 'em;" and, as if straining for a climax, he added, in very fair English, "*Give 'em my compliments!*"

The success of this enterprise is further proved by the industry and sobriety of these people and their susceptibility to control. Every day of the week, except Sunday, they were to be seen busily engaged at work. Idlers and loafers, there may have been, and doubtless were, but they never fell under my observation. Mr. Wickliffe said at the anti-emancipation meeting lately, held in New York, that at Port Royal he had understood that the negroes would not work, and that for every man was needed a special driver. If Mr. Wickliffe had said that black was white, or that two and two did not make four, his assertion would not have been more directly contrary to the truth.

These plantations are worked by purely voluntary labor; the driver, now called leader, having no power to force, and the superintendents having an average each of five or six plantations to oversee, which, being often miles distant, they can only attend to by occasional visits. The blacks are very tractable. A threat of the law operates like magic. A superintendent told me that a driver on one of his plantations was unruly. He reasoned



with him, but the driver was obstinate. At last he said, "If you don't go to work, I will speak to the Provost-Marshal and have you arrested." The effect was instantaneous. The man was both overawed and flattered—flattered because he had now risen to the dignity of being subject to law. He was not to be handed to the overseer for a hundred lashes, but he was to be *arrested!* The law, potent with all ignorant people, is trebly powerful with these. They are especially tractable under the management of Northern people. There is a universal feeling of admiration for and gratitude to the Northerners.

Though badly treated by some of our soldiers, officers and privates, they are, nevertheless, discriminating, and give the "Yankees," as they call us, due credit and more for all than can be claimed for us. They are especially grateful and attached to the teachers and superintendents. They think Northern "gentle people," "purtier and purtier behaved" than "secesh gentle people." For they see in these Northern gentlemen and ladies not only all the external grace of their old masters and mistresses, but superadded a genial courtesy—an easy and sympathetic condescension—which they had not dreamed of before in white people. These young scholars from Cambridge and Yale, and young merchants from Boston and New York, come into their huts, take off their hats, sit down on their benches, listen with interest to their talk, and shed tears at the recital of their wrongs. I speak literally. No man with flesh in his heart can listen without emotion to the stories they tell. These ladies visit their sick; put their soft white hands into the rough hands of the women field laborers; dress their sores and otherwise minister to their daily wants. Such kindness, such tender and beautiful attentions they had never before thought possible; as a consequence the teachers and superintendents thus acting can do with these simple people just what they please.

The contrast drawn by the blacks between Northern and Southern manners is not an unjust one. Slaveholders are, as a class, essentially vulgar and ill-bred. They may be familiar with the forms of politeness, but they are without its spirit. Vulgarians may pass for a time, with their equals or superiors, for ladies and

gentlemen, but when they get among those whom they regard as below them, they are sure to betray themselves. "Be pitiful, be courteous;" "condescend to men of low estate," are maxims of Christianity, the justice of which is acknowledged by the highest civilization. A man's behavior to his inferiors is the best test of his breeding. Tried by this, slaveholders as a class, are essentially vulgar.

I have many facts in my note-book on this head, which, if there were time, would illustrate this point. I have scraps of the private history of leading ladies and gentlemen in Beaufort and round about, with names and circumstances, which show that the airs of superiority assumed by these people are utterly unsupported by character, and indicate that their pretensions from beginning are a lie and a sham.

That the present condition of these people is in favorable contrast with that under their masters is evident from their songs, which constitute a striking feature in their manifestations of character. They are a musical people. When they work in concert, as in rowing or grinding at the mill, their hands keep time to music. Their boat songs are the ones most frequently heard. The islands are made and permeated by rivers and creeks, and the boat furnishes the most common mode of locomotion.

When the negroes begin to row, they at the same time begin to sing. All their songs are in the minor key. If one chances to begin on the major, it quickly saddens and passes into the minor. Their songs are all religious, barcaroles and all. I speak without exception. So far as I heard or was told of their singing, it was all religious. None of their songs express mirth or present joy. The only joy expressed or implied is that of hope. "Rest at last," was their general burthen; "Heaven is my home;" "Have a little patience;" "God will deliver"—these and the like were the refrains of all their ballads.

There was one which on shore we heard more than any other, and which was irresistibly touching. It was a sort of ballad, known as "Poor Rosy, Poor Gal." It is impossible to give an idea of the effect of this or any of their songs by a mere recital or description. They are all exceedingly simple, both in senti-

ment and melody. Each stanza contains but a single thought, set in perhaps two or three bars of music; and yet as they sing it in alternate recitative and chorus, with varying inflections and dramatic turn, this simple and otherwise monotonous melody will, to a musical ear and a heart susceptible of impression, have all the charm of variety. Take for instance, a few stanzas from the dirge of "Poor Rosy." Fancy the first line sung in the major key, and the two following changed by an easy transition, and with varying inflections, into the minor, and you will have some idea of the effect.

Poor Rosy, poor gal!  
 Poor—Rosy—poor—gal!  
 P-o-o-r R-o-s-y, p-o-o-r g-a-l!  
 Heaven shall be my home.

Hard trial in my way!  
 Hard—trial—in—my—way!  
 H-a-r-d t-r-i-a-l i-n m-y w-a-y!  
 Heaven shall be my home.

Wonder what de people want of me,  
 Wonder—what—de—people—want—of—me,  
 W-o-n-d-e-r w-h-a-t d-e p-e-o-p-l-e w-a-n-t o-f m-e,  
 Heaven shall be my home.

When I talk, I talk with God!  
 When—I—talk—I—talk—with—God!  
 W-h-e-n I t-a-l-k I t-a-l-k w-i-t-h G-o-d!  
 Heaven shall be my home.

I asked one of these blacks—one of the most intelligent I had met—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said, "I'll tell you, it's dis way. My master call me up and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise meeting dat night dey sing about it. Some's very good singers and know how; and dey work it in; work it in, you know, till they get it right; and dat's de way." A very satisfactory explanation; at least so it seemed to me.

I said these songs were all in the minor key. This is not quite the fact. They have one that has a cheerful, and, as it sounded when I first heard it, a hilarious ring. It is a new one, made, as they said, "since secesh times." It runs thus :

No more driver call for me,  
No more driver call ;  
No more driver call for me,  
Many a thousand die !

No more peck of corn for me,  
No more peck of corn ;  
No more peck of corn for me,  
Many a thousand die.

No more hundred lash for me,  
No more hundred lash ;  
No more hundred lash for me,  
Many a thousand die ;

and so on, recounting all the incidents of slave life.

When I first heard this song I was going from Hilton Head to Beaufort in a boat rowed by a half dozen men detailed from the 1st Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers. They were in fine voice and spirits, and the echoes came back from the inlets of Ladies and St. Helena with fine effect. As we passed along we encountered a boat load of black people rowing in the opposite direction. They were acquaintances of our oarsmen, and, after the first salutation, asked what those clothes meant? Our crew were dressed in the blue blouse and pants and felt hat, which constitute the uniform of the regiment. They explained—one of them adding, in a tone of laughing triumph, "We's Uncle Sam's chil'n now; we's Uncle Sam's chil'n now; we's none of your fiel' hans'." The others looked envious and passed on. The fact that these people are thought worthy to be enlisted as soldiers adds much to their self respect.

I dwell on these songs not as a matter of entertainment, but of instruction. They tell the whole story of these people's life and character. There is no need, after hearing them, to inquire into the history of the slave's treatment. Recitals of this kind

one will hear enough of, whether he desires it or not; for these poor things, having now, for the first time in their lives, sympathetic listeners, pour out their hearts in narrations which nothing but flint can resist. I ought to add, before leaving this subject, that their songs, like their talk, are couched in a barbarous Africanized sort of English, and are sometimes quite unintelligible. In the specimens I have here given I have not followed their pronunciation.

The success of a judicious system of free labor at the South is insured by the large development on the part of the blacks of the religious sentiment. As persons deprived of one sense acquire greater susceptibility in those that remain, so it would seem that these people, degraded in body, stunted in intellect, scarred and twisted out of shape in their muscular and mental forms of existence, have acquired additional strength in their spiritual life. Religion is universal among them. To be sure, in most cases it is a mere sentiment or habit, and not sufficient to preserve them against temptation; but in many cases it is a living and active operative principle. Their convictions are strong and their experiences vivid. They speak of "hearing God," and of God's "talking to" them, with a simplicity of faith which sounds fanatical, but to the philosophic mind it is by no means inconsistent with reason. Their spiritual perceptions are like those of sight or sound, and it is thus that they are supported in their trials. God is a present refuge to them in every time of trouble. "Francis," said I to an old gray-haired man who was conning over his spelling book, "why do you take the trouble to learn to read? You say it is hard work and very discouraging; why do you try?" "Because, massa, I want to be satisfied; I want to read de Word of God." "But can't you know the Word of God without reading it in a book?" "Yes, massa, I *do* know it; I know it *here!*" striking himself on the breast; "but I want to read it for myself." I had asked the same question of an elderly woman, on the Sunday previous, at Sunday-school. She was one of those spiritual-faced ones whom you will sometimes find amongst the most illiterate. Her countenance told a story of suffering and of triumph. "Tamar," said I, "why, at your age, do you

take so much trouble to learn to read?" "Because I want to read de Word of the Lord." "But can't you know the Word of the Lord without reading it?" "Yes, massa, I can *hear* it, but I want to *read* it." "How can you *hear* it?" "I hear de voice *here*," laying her hand on her heart; "I have heard it, massa." "When, Tamar, did you ever hear it?" Turning upon me her full, deep eyes, she said: "One morning, sah; one morning I went out to de woods before daylight to pray. My heart was full of sorrow; and when I was praying, de Lord spoke to me!" "And what did he say, Tamar?" "He said, 'Tamar! all you's sins is forgiven; you's my chile.'" "Well," said I, waiting for her to go on. "Den I was filled with lub and joy; my heart was full of lub for everybody." "Not for your old master too, Tamar?" "Yes, sir, for my master and eberybody." Now who will say that this old woman had not *heard* the voice of God? And whose religious faith will bear a stronger test than hers?

Religion has afforded these people their only resource; they have no amusements, no diversions, no social visiting. Their children have no plays—no games—such as joyous childhood naturally demands. To the older ones the "praise house" (prayers' house), as the hut in which they hold their meetings is called, is the only recreation. Here, as one of their songs goes, they

Sing and pray  
Their souls away.

in sweet forgetfulness of their wrongs.

The night after the bacon arrived from Philadelphia, the people on Pope's plantation gathered in the "praise house," and sung and prayed till broad daylight. It was an assurance to them that God had raised up for them friends at a distance, who would provide for their wants. In the camp of the black regiment there is, I was told, a prayer-meeting in one or other of the tents every night. I may here add, in passing, that there is no better behaved set of men on Hilton Head than this same "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers." Their appearance, in their dark blue uniform, is quite imposing. They handle the musket with as much dexterity as other new recruits, and their proficiency

in marching is more rapid. Their camp is kept neat and tidy, and they compare well in all respects with others of more favored complexion. As for their military capacity, and the wisdom of Gen. Hunter in enrolling them as soldiers, I say nothing here; not for want of well settled convictions on these points, but because these points are not embraced in the range of inquiry, the results of which it is my business here to report.

But I must hasten on. I should be glad to speak of the relation which this movement sustains to military people and affairs in South Carolina, and of the deep interest in its success which has been taken by distinguished officers of the army and navy. I refer more particularly to Gen. Hunter and Com. Dupont. Both of these gentlemen—and they are in all respects gentlemen—more than can be said of many others high in military and naval command—have shown themselves philanthropists, as well as patriots with a just sense of the honor of the country, by the care they have taken to protect and provide for the unhappy people who have been thrown upon the nation's charity.

The Port Royal Relief Committee, more deeply impressed than ever with the importance of their work, desire now to prosecute it with increased efficiency. They will be calling for funds and clothes, and superintendents for the plantations, and teachers. There will be no need hereafter to send provisions; the Government will see to that. But clothes for the aged, for the infirm, and for children, will have to come for a while yet from the charities of the people.

The able-bodied can support themselves, but they must be protected from imposition. It is contemplated by the committee to establish a store on one of the islands, at which goods can be bought at rates covering first cost and transportation. This is deemed necessary to save these poor people from the exactions to which they are subject from the traders and sutlers, who first rob them of their money and then slander their character.

Thirty new superintendents are needed at this moment on plantations. Of these, Boston will furnish ten, New York ten, and Philadelphia ought to send the other ten. Gen. Saxton, on the part of the Government, will pay these superintendents fifty

dollars a month. Teachers are also wanted. These will derive their support from the Relief Committee; their pay will not be such as to make the appointment an object, as twenty-five dollars a month will be the maximum.

The qualifications required on the part of both superintendents and teachers are, good health, good sense, and a hearty good will for the work. Of the ninety odd who went out last spring, quite a number proved incompetent. These had not gone from the right motive, nor were they of the right spirit. They went, hoping the climate would be good for their health, or from a spirit of romance, or to see a semi-tropical country with its peculiar productions, or in a spirit of sectarian religious zeal, or from some other motive not essentially unselfish, and in harmony with an all-pervading desire to be useful. As a consequence, they soon got tired; or their coadjutors got tired of them. There was a great deal of work to be done; and to them the life was one of dull, monotonous drudgery. They have, therefore, come home. Those that remain have a heart for the work. It is their delight. The good they do is palpable; and they have the reward in their own bosoms. More like these are needed, especially as superintendents. It is not the pushing, driving, and rough-and-ready kind of people, that are sometimes called "practical," that are most needed. The forces of chief avail here are those of a spiritual nature, such as proceed from a heart devoted to the work, and from manners and character that inspire respect. The best educated and best bred people, other things being equal, are the best qualified for usefulness in this enterprise. The blacks have quick intuitions; a man of coarse nature is sure to be detected. Experience at Port Royal has proved that refinement in a superintendent is all important, both in order to commend the man to the confidence of the blacks and the enterprise to the respect of white cavillers around, who are ever on the look out for grounds of objection. But I will add nothing more on this point—broad as is the subject—nor on any other, at this time. The night is hot, and I have trespassed, already too long on your forbearance. Thanking you for your patience, I here abruptly close my remarks.



THE  
FREED BLACKS OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

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LETTER FROM J. M. M'KIM

TO STEPHEN COLWELL, Esq., Chairman of the Port  
Royal Relief Committee.

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PHILADELPHIA, July 24, 1862.

DEAR SIR:—I comply with your request to add in this form, what, for lack of time, I was obliged to omit in my address of the 9th inst., as well as to restate some things which for the sake of condensation, were left out of the published report.

I. One point alluded to on that occasion, but not discussed, was the mooted one of the black man's courage. Has the negro the spirit—the *pluck*—to do his proper part in maintaining the *status* now, or hereafter to be, assigned to him? This is a practical query, clearly within the scope which, as I understand it, my inquiries were expected to take. I will answer it by the statement of a few facts, general and particular—*pro* and *con*. First, general and *con*:

Servitude is not a condition favorable to the growth of courage. Chattel slavery, in fact as well as in law, unmans its victims. The Helots were not so brave as their Spartan masters. The African, on his own continent, and on this, is of a milder type of character, and less given to war than the Anglo-Saxon or Celt. The negroes in our Southern States have not, since the breaking out of this rebellion, made haste to rise in insurrection; neither do they now show any especial eagerness to enlist as soldiers. In certain contingencies, not unlikely to happen, it would not be safe to count confidently on their fighting qualities.

But, on the other hand, man is a fighting animal. Courage is an essential quality of his nature. The power to face danger, and death if needs be, without flinching, is common to the whole human family, in all countries, and under all circumstances. While the Helots were not equal to their masters, nevertheless, as soldiers under them they made the Spartan arms invincible to

the world. The African naturally prefers the toils of peace; but he has always, when occasion required it, shown himself capable of the arts of war. Up to this time in his history he has never failed to fight when he has had at the same time the motive and the means. His record on his native continent, in our revolutionary war, in the war of 1812, and in the history of San Domingo, furnish ample illustrations of this fact.

"Then why does he not now rise," it is asked, "in insurrection?" I myself put this question to an intelligent negro, well known at Beaufort, Prince Rivers by name, now a Sergeant in the First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers. "Why," said I, "don't the blacks on the main now rise against their masters?" "Lord, sah," was the reply, "what would be de use? Dey has no chance. What could dey do? no gun, no sword, no knowledge, no chance—no nuthin'."

"But suppose they had a chance, would they fight then?" "Yes, sah." "How do you know they would?" "'Cause I know dey would. Only let 'em know for sure—for sure, mine you—dat de white people means right; let 'em know for sure dat dey's fightin' for themselves, and I know dey will fight." "Well, Prince, wouldn't you call this a good chance?" "Yes, sah; I do call this a good chance, and I tell my people may be it's de last chance. Dat's de reason I jine de soldier. I was gettin' big wages in Beaufort, but I'd rather take less, and fight for de United States; for I believe de United States is fightin' for me, and for my people." "Do your people generally feel as you do?" "No, sah; but dey would if dey knowed de same as I do." This is the testimony, substantially in his own words, of a black man, who is regarded where he lives as in all respects competent to bear witness on the subject.

In one of my visits to the town of Beaufort, I conversed with Hannah Small, wife of Robert Small, the hero of the "Planter," and heard from her the whole story of that adventure. According to her statement, which was amply corroborated by facts previously known, the men and women engaged in that exploit were animated by a courage that would be equal to any of the perils incident to a condition of war. The whole party had solemnly agreed in advance that if pursued, and without hope of escape, the ship should be scuttled and sunk; and that, if she should not go down fast enough to prevent capture, they should

all take hands, husband and wife, brother and sister, and jump overboard and perish together! Now, I think that, if you will add to the courage evinced in this transaction by the whole party, the cool, strategic skill of its leaders, you will have a fact that will throw some light on this mooted question.

Before leaving the island I had a letter from a gentleman—one of the superintendents—containing an incidental allusion to this subject, which it may not be amiss here to quote :

“Ordinarily,” says the writer, “the blacks show a lack of courage, but when an emergency occurs, they display a coolness which I would like to commend to their white brethren. About ten days ago we were roused from our beds about daylight by one of the neighboring superintendents, with the cry that the rebels were upon us, and that we must go to the boats immediately. All were startled, and much panic prevailed among the whites, (there were three men of us and two women,) and two of the men undertook in an excited manner to force the men of color to leave their families. The colored men stood calm, and did not move, till one of them said, ‘If massa will tell us what to do, we’ll do whatever massa says.’ Then being directed, they took hold, and we were soon in our boat and under way. A short time after we left, some Union pickets came in, and in an excited manner told the people that the rebels would be there in twenty minutes, and would burn the plantation house.

“They were believed; but instead of running off as we did, the women of the party collected *our* household stuff, clothing and valuables, placed them in a box, while the men took it on their heads, went to the woods near by, dug a large pit, and buried the box, and covered the place with brushwood; after that they went about taking care of themselves, and looking after their own things. They then placed the old people and children in little canoes, ran them into creeks into the marsh during high tide, and there remained concealed in the high grass for six hours, till return tide, under a blazing sun. Everything was done coolly and with method. I could but notice the contrast.”

II. Speaking, in my address, of the goods sent to the blacks, the clothing, made and unmade, etc., I intimated that their distribution was not made wholly as an act of charity, but that a portion of them were sold. The money to pay for these goods was made by the negroes by picking and packing cotton, planting the new crop—a dollar an acre on which had been paid by Mr. Pierce—and selling chickens, eggs, vegetables, fresh fish, and the like, to the soldiers. The negroes show quite a Yankee turn for traffic. This may be noticed by any one who will watch

them on the beach at Hilton Head, where they come in their canoes to dispose of their commodities. The men of the 100th Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts 1st are quite sharp at driving a bargain, but the negroes are fully a match for them. They will dispose of their half-fledged chickens at fifty cents a pair, their eggs at a quarter of a dollar a dozen, and their scanty strings of mullet or whiting at "a quarter," in as short a time and with as much ease as would any old Jersey marketman, brought up to the business on the curbstones of Philadelphia.

On my return from my tour I brought home to the Treasurer of the Committee nearly \$300—the proceeds in cash of goods sold from the Philadelphia boxes on the island of St. Helena. Mr. Philbrick, one of the superintendents from Boston on the same island, told me that he had sold for cash goods to the amount of about \$800, and that he could have made the amount larger if he had had the articles. He had purchased the goods out of his own pocket, and sold them at wholesale prices, his object being to accommodate the people and save them from the extortion of sutlers and other traders. Since coming North, I have received a letter from this gentleman, in which he gives the items of his sales, which items throw incidental light on another subject germane to this, and I will therefore quote them. They are as follows:—

Sugar, at 12c per lb.—1 bbl., . . . . .	\$18 22
Molasses, 50c per gallon—4 bbls., . . . . .	78 00
Shoes, at \$1 per pair, . . . . .	40 00
Salt, at \$1 per bushel, . . . . .	19 00
Cotton Denims, 15c per yard—2,420 yards, . . . . .	363 00
Tobacco, at 20c and 38c per lb., . . . . .	68 00
Soap, at 20c per bar, . . . . .	6 50
Ready-made clothing, . . . . .	223 00

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\$816 52

Connected with this, let me state that among the Philadelphia articles that were exposed for sale a few days before I left, were a quantity of very small, low-priced looking glasses, and a half-dozen iron pots and pans. The former came into immediate request, and for the latter—there not being enough to supply the demand—there was almost a scramble.

The point on which "incidental light" is thrown by these facts, is, *the enlarged market for Northern manufactures that*

*will be created by an enlarged area of freedom.* The average cost of maintaining a slave, independent of his food, has been computed at \$13 50 per annum for a field-hand, or \$4 50 a head all round. This covers the expense of two suits of clothes, two shirts, and every six years a pair of blankets; and, for field-hands only—that is, for about one out of every three—a chip hat, or cheap cap, and one pair of shoes; and, for such as are old enough to need it, one handkerchief. Whatever they get over this, as a general thing, they buy out of their own earnings.

Now, it will be seen that, as soon as these people become free, their wants increase. They begin to demand articles of clothing like that worn by the laborers at the North; and articles of house use also, such as pots, kettles, pans, brushes, brooms, knives, forks, spoons, soap, candles, combs, Yankee clocks, etc., etc. Some of these articles are already in request; others are coming into demand. Ten thousand new customers, to be sure, is not a very large number in the aggregate of a nation, but they are sufficient to effect somewhat the gains of Northern men of business. Now fancy this 10,000 multiplied by 400, making 4,000,000, the total number of slaves in the country, and what an overwhelming economical argument does it furnish in favor of pushing this Port Royal experiment to its logical conclusion.

◆ III. The subject of climate is one which, in this connection, needs a passing notice. It is a matter on which much ignorance prevails, and in regard to which even the best informed acknowledge a want of light. The climate question at the South has been made subservient to the slavery question, and there is reason to believe that the alleged facts propagated from that quarter, in favor of the one, are not much more to be relied upon than those that have been put forward in support of the other.

The favorite theory of the Charleston savans, as stated in the loose phraseology in which one oftenest hears it is: "A night on the plantations during the height of summer is almost certain death to a Northern white man;" or, as it is put forward by its more cautious advocates: "The Southern climate is fatal to unacclimated white people; they cannot bear the sun in day time, nor breathe the air at night without imminent danger of life." The inference they desire to be drawn from this is, that cotton, rice and sugar can only be raised successfully at the South by black slave labor. Now, whatever may be the truth on the

general subjects of climate and slavery, the fact of this argument is as lame as its logic. Our soldiers on Hilton Head, reputedly one of the least healthful of the islands, toil in the sun by day and stand guard at night; and yet up to this time they appear to be as healthy as the same number of men in similar service in other parts of the field. White carpenters from the North, who have been working for the government there, say that they can bear exposure to the weather as well and even better than the colored carpenters working alongside of them. They can stand the sun nearly as well, and the rain and the sudden changes of the weather a great deal better.

I was admonished, while debating whether or not to undertake this tour, that it would be dangerous to go to Port Royal after the 1st of June. When I had made up my mind to go, I was advised not to expose myself to the sun; to keep in out of the night air; not to sleep with my windows open; not to drink the water of the country, but instead to slake my thirst with tea, coffee, or claret! But I did go after the 1st of June; I exposed myself considerably to the sun, and spent a large part of nearly every night in the open air; I always slept with my windows open; and I drank the water freely; in no instance resorting to either tea, coffee, or claret as a means of quenching my thirst; and yet I never enjoyed better health in my life than I did there and since my return.

I am aware that "one swallow does not make a summer," nor one summer prove the truth of a theory; but when the experience of a single individual is sustained by that of a whole body—as is mine by that of the teachers and superintendents—a fact is furnished of some significance; and the presumption is raised that if one half of the pro-slavery climatic theory rests upon false data, as has been shown to be the case, the other half may not be much more firmly supported.

That there will be sickness—epidemic sickness—in many cases fatal sickness, in these islands this summer, is more than probable. A rank vegetation under a high solar heat, long continued, must produce malaria, which in turn must produce disease; but that this disease will be more virulent, or more widely spread than the epidemics of other low lands, in regard to which there is no especial fear—as for instance, the valleys of the west, or the Atlantic flats of the east, is a matter in regard to which much

may be said on both sides. For, as a set-off against the heat of the sun at Port Royal, it must be remembered there is the refreshing sea breeze ; and, as a counteractive of the miasmata in the air, there is the salt with which the atmosphere is at all times more or less impregnated.

In view of all these facts, the most intelligent people on the island, with whom I conversed, expressed but little apprehension of disease. The truth is, more concern was manifested about the mosquitoes and fleas than about yellow fever. The one was a present and actual evil, the other a future and contingent one. As it was, the teachers and superintendents were cheerful and happy. Most of them were willing to remain throughout the season. They had come there from a high sense of duty, and there, from the same motive, they meant to abide. At the end of three months they will be able to give more information about the climate of South Carolina than can probably be learned from any other source.

IV. Independent of the matter of climate, there are other sanitary aspects to this question which demand a share of attention. There is reason to suspect that the slaveholder's therapeutics are as much at fault as his ethics or economics. The Southern medical man delights in the "heroic system." His favorite reliances are mercury, antimony, and cantharides ; drastic doses inwardly and torturing applications outwardly. When well, a Southern man's diet is salt pork, with stimulating drinks to make it digestible ; when sick, his medicine an exhausting cathartic to "clear him out," and a horse-power tonic to build him up. In other words, the knocking down and jerking up practice\* of the plantation carried into medicine ; and this prac-

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\* I brought away with me from the islands two slave-holders' journals which came into my possession there, which contain many curious things, and among the rest copious notes of medical practice. One of these, slightly abbreviated, but in its original language, I copy by way of illustration, taking it at random from a number of the same kind. It is as follows :

"*Charlotte's Case of Typhoi Pneumonia.*—On Tuesday she came to me and said she had a bile under her arm which gave her fever. Ordered poultice and a dose of salts. Next morning pult quicker and quicker ; salts had acted freely. Next evening my wife told me she was brought to the yard, and she thought her quite an ill negro. Saw her and found my wife's opinion correct, and that she had began to do what was proper, viz : gave her flaxseed tea, with a little Tartar. Found to bleed her impossible : the Golden time had passed. She complained of violent head-

tice carried out with rigid uniformity and disregard of exceptional cases. The same prescriptions (the expense being equal) for the black man, whose blood is thin from a hominy diet and prostrating labor, as for the white man whose vessels are turgid with a surplus of meat and riotous living. Surely if a Southerner can stand all this, and his climate besides, it is fair to suppose that a Northern man, with a constitution at least equal and a better system of hygiene and medicine, might risk a residence at Port Royal with the hope of surviving it.

Investigation and experiments will, in all probability, show that the health difficulty in the way of reconstruction at the South is no more formidable than others which have already found a solution. Perhaps it will turn out in the matter of medicine, as in that of morality and religion, that the best wisdom is to be found with the slaves. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." A medical gentleman on Port Royal Island, who serves the Association in the double capacity of surgeon and superintendent,

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ache. Ordered mustard poultice back of the neck. Finding next day that the disease was very obstinate, pult increasing in quickness and symptoms more aggravating, I put on a blister and commenced with small doses of calomel, nitre and opium, continuing the flax tea and Tartar. Saturday, the fourth day, no better; applied blister again and added a little more calomel. Symptoms increasingly worse, and now pult 120. Fifth day applied another blister and the same prescriptions as the day before. Sixth day no better. Saw Dr. H. M. Fuller and got his advice. Recommended stimulants composed of ammonia and pepper, and said I must depend principally upon the blisters, which I have done, but see as yet no earthly benefit derived from anything yet made use of. Seventh day another blister and pepper tea more freely; her breathing more difficult and some reluctance to swallow; a vacant look and somewhat deaf. Eighth day weaker and worse; tried another blister and had to give her wine whey to hold her up, with the ammonia and pepper tea; but all in vain; she kept growing weaker and weaker until about nine o'clock at night, she died. Thus has terminated a case which has caused me more anxiety and concern than any case of a colored person I have ever attended."

It ought to be added that the cure of souls, not of the body, was the professional function of this gentleman.

It is impossible to read this extract without being reminded of Charles Lamb's letter to Bernard Barton:

"Did you ever have an obstinate cold—a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything? Yet do I try all I can to cure it; I try wine and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they only seem to make me worse instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o'nights, but do not find any visible amendment!"



informed me that on entering upon his duties he found a large number of the people ill with small-pox and other fevers of a dangerous character; that not one of the small-pox cases had proved fatal, though some of them were very aggravated, and that he ascribed this fact more to the skill and judgment of an old black nurse whom he had found there, than to any power of his own in the healing art. In a letter which this gentleman has since written me he thus alludes to this subject:

“I owe much of my success to the presence of a very excellent and intelligent colored woman—‘Aunt Hannah’—who has been unremitting in her labors. I generally administered a laxative in the initial stages of the fever, and after that, teas, as practised by the black nurses—such as orange leaf, rosemary, and life everlasting. This I did from the conviction that it would be unwise to depart from uniform habits so long established and so deeply rooted. The result has been exceedingly gratifying, and has taught me that all of wisdom is not confined to the ‘schools.’ The method of treatment by the nurses is exceedingly simple, and I am now satisfied very effectual. I am not ashamed to say that I have learned many useful lessons from these simple people.”

The blacks on these islands have, from tradition and experiment, accumulated many facts in regard to the healing powers of roots, herbs, and the like, which men of science might turn to good account. They themselves, however, express more faith in the white man’s medicines than in their own. When I would ask them what they did in this, that, or the other kind of sickness; what they gave for this, and what they took for that, they would answer invariably by mentioning some drug of the apothecary, such as ipecac, calomel, salts, or something else that “massa” would give them. “But suppose your master was not near, and that there was no white man to give you anything—then what would you do?” “Den we take orange leaf—de sour orange, not de sweet (the native seedling, not the grafted), and we make tea of him; dat make we sweat and take away the fever;” or, “we tie up de head wid ‘gympson’ leaves (stramonium); dat make we quiet and stop de pain;” or, “we give it (the child) Asia root tea; dad bery good for de worms,” etc., etc. By a course of interrogation like this, facts were elicited showing that these ignorant people have quite a copious pharmacopœia. They have their sudorifics, anthelmintics, diuretics, carminatives, antispasmodics, etc., etc., some of which they claim to be specifics, and none of which certainly are any the less valuable because called by a

homely negro name, instead of a learned technic from the dictionary. It is fair to presume that among the simple remedies of these people are to be found some quite as efficacious and a good deal less dangerous than many that are weighed out from the shelves of the apothecary. It is to be hoped that Gen. Saxton will have on his medical staff men competent and willing to give to this subject the attention due to its importance. The sanitary question is closely allied to the slavery question; whatever throws light upon the one aids in the solution of the other.

V. I have in my possession some letters from gentlemen at Port Royal which I should have been pleased to introduce in the course of my address at Sansom Hall; but there was not time; neither is there space here. Nevertheless, as some of them contain testimony corroborative of statements made in the speech, as well as new matter for thought and reflection, I will take the liberty of making a few quotations. The first shall be from a letter from Mr. Philbrick, the superintendent from Boston, to whom reference has already been made. He says:

“They (the blacks) work on with a degree of confidence and industry that has surprised me. Though we came on to the ground nearly two months later than the date when they generally begin to prepare for the new crops, we have planted more than half the ground that was planted last year, including a much larger breadth of corn. The generally expressed feeling is one of content; they are willing to endure a certain amount of privation for the sake of being their own masters. There is, too, a very general feeling of religious trust; a feeling that God has interfered to drive away their old masters and give them a chance for themselves. . . . They never refer to their masters' cruelty unless closely questioned. I have not searched for cases of this kind, because I thought it a waste of time to talk over past troubles when the present hour was so crowded with duties. They have no malice in their hearts.

“I overheard one of the servants in this house, the other day, telling another that he ought to pray for ‘old massa.’ ‘No, I won't,’ said Joe, ‘I *can't* pray for him.’ ‘Oh, yes,’ said Flora, ‘who knows but he may now be perishing for want of a meal's victuals, while you have plenty.’ There is a lesson, thought I, in Christian forgiveness, which a woman of more culture would do well to study. I do not believe there is another race in the world so docile or so easily managed. I am confident that no Irishman could be induced to perform the amount of labor they have accomplished this year with so little definite promise of payment. They work well and willingly whenever they see clearly

that they are to profit by their labor. It is to be regretted that so large a portion of their work this year has been upon a common field, where there was not felt that individual interest which alone can stimulate labor to its best results. This gang system is a relic of the old slave system, and it must be abandoned when the people come to work for regular wages.

"I will only say, in conclusion, that I came here from my home in dear old Massachusetts, impelled by a sense of duty, to see what could be done toward organizing a system of free labor out of the crumbling ruins of the old method. I have become deeply interested in the work, and shall continue here from the same motive that brought me till I see the organization sufficiently perfected to stand alone and sustain itself as a beacon light before the world."

Mr. Richard Soule, Jr., also of Massachusetts, in a letter containing much valuable information, has the following :

"There is but one feeling among the negroes in respect to their present condition as compared with that under their old masters. They consider themselves much better off, and have no desire for the return of their masters. They would take to the woods or escape in boats, they all say, if they had any intimation that their masters were coming back.

"Our experiment here has fully satisfied me of two things : first, that the negroes will do as much work in the condition of freemen, and under a judicious system of day-wages, as they formerly did under the stimulus of the lash ; secondly, that there is no need of providing for the emigration of any considerable portion of them, as they would prefer to stay where they are, and as their services will be required on the places where they have been accustomed to labor.

"The time has arrived, it seems to us, for the Government to take some definite steps in this matter. If the *status* of these blacks is now that of freemen, let us know it beyond a doubt, and then we can work for their improvement and elevation, both physically and morally, with much better heart than we do now, when the future seems so uncertain.

"If they are declared to be free, my plan would be to pay them day wages for their work, and require them to purchase all they need in the way of food and clothing, abolishing the present system of allowances and gratuities of land for private cultivation. I would have an account kept of their hours of work, precisely as is done in our workshops in the North, the pay to be graduated according to the amount of work done. In this way they would soon learn to appreciate the advantages of industry, and would soon acquire the thrifty habits of freemen.

"The improvement of their physical condition being first secured, I would make provisions for their education by establish-

ing schools in convenient localities, with competent teachers, to be paid in part at first, and wholly by and by, by a tax on the parents. It would not take a long time, I think, to make the entire population self-supporting, and to enable the more thrifty of them to accumulate something in advance of their immediate wants."

I have one more letter from which I desire to quote, and I shall have done. It is from the "medical gentleman" above referred to, Dr. James P. Greves, superintendent and physician on Edgely plantation, Port Royal Island.

"When I arrived on the 15th of March, I found everything here in a chaotic state. Being suddenly left by their former masters, who also took with them the teams on the place and many implements; afterwards the United States troops taking all their cattle, milch cows, sheep, and other stock—even their corn, they seemed to be at a loss what to do. Of course no work of any consequence was done, and without a forthcoming crop they must starve, or be sustained by the Government. They therefore cordially welcomed me, and agreed to work under my directions. I found but one mule to do the ploughing; therefore most of the work must be done by the hoe.

"To add to the difficulties, the small-pox made its appearance in an aggravated form, and there being no one here to caution them, very many had been exposed to its contagion. The result has been that out of 71 residents on the place, 29 have had small-pox, and many have been prostrated with other forms of sickness, measles being also very prevalent. No one case of small-pox has proved fatal. I owe much, etc." (already quoted). "With all these drawbacks there are now planted, and in fine growing condition, about 90 acres of corn, 43 of cotton, and 17 of sweet potatoes, peas, and other vegetables. If the season prove favorable, we shall have a surplus. At present, the population is almost entirely sustained by Government, and must so continue to be till the corn is ripe. They are generally destitute of clothing of all kinds. Their masters issued to them their last supply in December, 1860; consequently they suffer from want of necessary clothing. This want has been partially supplied from the North; but very few shoes have been sent. We need shoes now for fall use. Flannels, when they can be had, are worn the year round, on account of the humidity of the climate. I would here state, to the honor of our soldiers, that many of the people would have been naked, had they not received clothing from them.

"I have been impressed from the first with the belief that the primary care of the superintendents should be for the welfare of their bodies. Very little real progress can be made in reforming

any people whose physique is neglected. They are naturally a religious class, and that part of their nature needs but little direct stimulation ; but they need to be led into correct habits of body, and how can this be accomplished if they are allowed to continue to live in filthy, dark and contracted huts? You have seen a specimen of them. How can you raise a healthy ambition among such a people under such circumstances? Improve their physical, and they will rapidly improve in the moral and religious departments of their nature. In school they learn rapidly, and all ages join, from gray hairs to childhood. For the first four weeks, I taught in the evening, being too much occupied through the day by other pressing duties. Since that time, assisted by Miss Howell and Miss Wright, we have had four sessions a day, to accommodate the working as well as the other classes of our people. Many of them now read in the Testament, and nearly all have made good progress ; about fifty in all have been thus taught.

“They have their vices. Deception and petty thieving prevail. They are careless, indolent and improvident. They have a miserable habit of scolding and using authoritative language to one another. All these vices are clearly the result of *slave education*, and will gradually disappear under improved conditions. Miss Howell has established a sewing school among them, which was much needed. Heretofore when a garment began to give way it was thrown aside ; now they see the benefit of mending. But very little progress can be made until larger and better dwellings are furnished them. I hope government will allow the avails of the cotton crop to be appropriated in part to an improvement in this respect. There is now not a sawmill on any of the islands, although there is abundance of timber. A most economical expenditure at this time would be the erection of such a mill, and the employment of a good Yankee to run it. The fall is now near at hand, and better houses are an absolute necessity. The tenements on this place are rotting down and leak badly. How the people are to be made comfortable during the next winter, I do not know. Had they new and roomy cabins they would be ambitious to keep them clean. The groundwork of reform and progress must be improvement in the physical condition and surroundings. They excel the whites in emotional religion, but their intellects need cultivation ; there must be education therefore to establish an equilibrium. I am satisfied that the law of kindness will work like a charm with them. As teachers and guides we need unwearying patience and steady perseverance—never losing sight of the fact that habits inwrought by time into the texture of their being require time to eradicate. In several instances I have been tried to the utmost by serious

quarrels among the people, which seemed to require prompt interference; but I always kept cool, and put off adjudication for twenty-four hours. In the mean time they have had time for reflection, and before the twenty-four hours would be expired the party most in the wrong would come and acknowledge the wrong, and promise amendment. If one is honest with them, and gets their confidence, the rest is easily accomplished."

The suggestions in this last extract, in regard to things needed by the blacks, remind me of a memorandum that was furnished me before leaving the Islands, and which it was understood I should in some way or other make public. It was as follows:

"The clothes most in request here are coats, shirts, and trousers for men; jackets, shirts, and trousers for boys of eight to sixteen; frocks and chemises for women and girls. Flannels are needed and should be provided in the proportion of not less than one to six; that is, one-sixth of the undergarments should be flannel to meet the necessities of the weakly and infirm. Clothes for newly-born babies and for babies up to a year old much needed; also for school children of both sexes, from five to twelve, and for older boys and girls, from eight to sixteen.

"In purchasing new things don't let the mistake be made of catering to what by some is considered 'the negro taste.' Their taste is the same as ours. The prettiest things—that is, the things that we would consider prettiest—are always first chosen. Yellow osnabergs are their detestation; they are ugly in themselves, and remind the people of their condition as slaves.

"Made-up clothing is always acceptable, especially that for children, which should all be ready-made; but it is not necessary that clothes for the adult should be made up. This they can do for themselves. Many of them prefer to buy the stuff and make it up their own way."

Before closing this letter, sir, I deem it proper to say, that the enterprise in which your Committee is interested is under obligation for many acts of kindness and coöperation performed by officers of the army and navy at Port Royal, especially by the two distinguished gentlemen who respectively command at that point. The deep interest manifested by Gen. Hunter in the success of this movement—his protecting care over the blacks, and his considerate kindness to the white instructors—have been matters of grateful acknowledgment to the friends of the cause, as well as of bitter misrepresentation to its foes. To no other military man in the field, perhaps, are the freed blacks of Port Royal, or their friends, or the honor of the country, so far as

they are concerned, so much indebted as to David Hunter, Major-General commanding in the Department of the South.

To Com. Dupont is due a similar acknowledgment. While at Beaufort, looking over a book containing accounts of the New York Association, I saw an entry to this effect: "52 dresses, 20 shirts, 200 yards calico, needles, etc., etc., got by Com. Dupont for the freed people on St. Simond's Island." This little circumstance, of no importance in itself, indicates the practical interest taken by the head of our fleet at Port Royal in the welfare of the deserted and defenceless people whom he regards as in some sort thrown upon his care. In an interview I had with him on the Wabash, I said: "Commodore, the gentlemen on our Committee will be greatly pleased to learn that you have had no disposition to throw obstacles in the way of their enterprise." "*Obstacles, my dear sir!*" was the reply, "so far from it, it has been my greatest pleasure to co-operate with these philanthropic gentlemen."

I am particular in these details of feeling and conduct manifested by the two gentlemen named, chiefly because their services to the freed people call for recognition, but partly also because their respective antecedents and history are such as to invest them with a peculiar interest in the eyes of Philadelphians. Gen. Hunter was born near this city, on the Jersey side of the Delaware. His father, who was Professor of Mathematics in Princeton College, was a native of Pennsylvania. The General himself is closely connected by family ties with prominent citizens living in and resident near this city. We have, therefore, a local as well as general interest in his fortunes and good name. The same may be said of Com. Dupont. In the interview already referred to, he alluded, and, I fancied, with some pride, to Philadelphia as his "nearest city," and spoke of its people as including many of his best and most honored friends. For these reasons, therefore, I hope to be pardoned for these somewhat personal allusions.

Without further protracting this letter, already too much extended, I subscribe myself, dear sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

J. M. McKim.









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